

The Land Question and the Peasantry in Southern Africa	Titulo
Moyo, Sam - Autor/a;	Autor(es)
Politics and Social Movements in an Hegemonic World: Lessons from Africa, Asia and Latin America	En:
Buenos Aires	Lugar
CLACSO, Consejo Latinoamericano de Ciencias Sociales	Editorial/Editor
2005	Fecha
Sur-Sur	Colección
marginalidad; relaciones interétnicas; marginalismo; tenencia de la tierra; reforma agraria; descolonización; campesinado; redistribución de la tierra; Sudafrica;	Temas
Capítulo de Libro	Tipo de documento
<a href="http://bibliotecavirtual.clacso.org.ar/clacso/sur-sur/20100711022553/13_Moyo.pdf">http://bibliotecavirtual.clacso.org.ar/clacso/sur-sur/20100711022553/13_Moyo.pdf</a>	URL
Reconocimiento-No comercial-Sin obras derivadas 2.0 Genérica <a href="http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/2.0/deed.es">http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/2.0/deed.es</a>	Licencia

**Segui buscando en la Red de Bibliotecas Virtuales de CLACSO**  
<http://biblioteca.clacso.edu.ar>

**Consejo Latinoamericano de Ciencias Sociales (CLACSO)**  
**Conselho Latino-americano de Ciências Sociais (CLACSO)**  
**Latin American Council of Social Sciences (CLACSO)**  
[www.clacso.edu.ar](http://www.clacso.edu.ar)



Consejo Latinoamericano de Ciencias Sociales  
Conselho Latino-americano de Ciências Sociais  
Latin American Council of Social Sciences



**Sam Moyo\***

## **The Land Question and the Peasantry in Southern Africa\*\***

### **Introduction**

The land questions facing Southern Africa are dominated by the negative effects of distorted settler-colonial decolonization and the associated failure to address the national question, sustainable development, and democracy, within the context of incomplete national democratic revolutions. While important differences exist in the nature of the Southern African countries' land questions and ways in which these have been addressed, there are critical similarities in the fundamental socio-political and economic questions that arise from the persistent conflicts that ensue from unequal land distribution and discriminatory land tenure systems (Moyo, 2003).

Land remains a basic source of the livelihood of the majority of Southern Africans, and is essential to the development of agriculture, tourism and housing. Economic development within a context of agrarian transformation and industrialization tends to be distorted by the spread of skewed agrarian structures in the region. Thus, the land question is not only an agrarian issue but also a critical social question regarding inequitable patterns of resource allocation within the rural-urban divide and the agricultural-industrial divide. This underlies the persistently conflictive relations of class, gender, race and ethnicity, as well as the processes of inter-class labour exploitation, differential taxation and resource access and benefits, in the context of the marginalization of the majority rural populations in the region. Even in South Africa and Zambia, more urbanized than elsewhere in the region, high unemployment rates (ranging between 30-50%) have caused land questions to be attenuated by the wider crisis of homeless and jobless urbanization and dependence on straddling rural-urban livelihoods. Inequitable land ownership and utilisation patterns distort the integration of space and developments strategy due to the predominance of narrow enclave development (Nzimande, 2004).

The peasant question in Southern Africa has for long been subordinated in terms of ideology and substance by white settler landlordism and institutionalized racial discrimination by the state and capital, and justified by an agrarian modernization project based on peripheral export oriented capitalist agriculture (Moyo, *The land question in Africa*). Thus, land and racial conflicts that affect Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe have remained unaddressed for long, despite the fact that their peasantries continue to be marginalized and to expand. In other Southern African countries, new land questions arise from emerging land and agrarian differentiation.

Zimbabwe has broken with this trend, and exhibits critical insights on the future of the peasantry having reshaped its agrarian structure substantially in terms of the scale and quality of the producer base and social relations. This has yielded rural and agrarian class formation processes which, while enabling the peasantry to maintain itself at basic levels of social reproduction, have spawned a new differentiated agrarian class structure, which however privileges "peripheral" (or semi-peripheral) capital accumulation among an expanded but deracialised economically straddling elite. This essentially bimodal path of agrarian change presents the contradictory class interests of large capitalists, middle "peasants" and "poor" peasants and workers, whereby resolving racial aspects of the land question through a peripheral export economic model predicates the continuation of poverty among a peasantry within a marginalized economy.

On the other hand, the land question in South Africa remains unresolved partly because of its own gradualistic neoliberal approach to land reform, but largely because the peasant question (or even the small farmer development trajectory) has been denied by official land reform policy and intellectual debate. This reflects teleological tendencies of debates, which envision greater industrial and non-agricultural employment growth that is expected to diminish peasant demand for land, as well as ideologies that decry the "inefficiency" of peasant

production systems and livelihoods *per se*. The growing urban and peri-urban demand for land, required for housing and petty commodity production, which is contingent upon growing semi-proletarianisation and unemployment, has however also been neglected by South Africa's market based land reform and neoliberal social security policies. These trends raise the spectre of increased land conflicts resulting from the demands of a growing but blocked peasantry and the urban poor, as well as a nascent black bourgeoisie, poised against minority white landlords.

The dilemmas of the land question in Southern Africa arise from a poor understanding of the peasant question in particular, and of the constraints on "articulated" development in the semi-periphery.

The fate of the peasantry in terms of its socio-economic character and political significance under capitalism remains central to neo-colonial Southern African futures<sup>1</sup>. Is the peasantry disappearing economically or becoming politically insignificant (Moyo and Yeros, 2004) given the emerging perception on agrarian change, since "the implementation of structural adjustment policies and market liberalisation worldwide has had a dissolving effect on peasant livelihoods"? (Bryceson, 2000). In this light, what is the land question in Southern Africa?

## **The land question in Southern Africa**

### **From decolonization to radical and neoliberal land reforms**

Different forms of settler colonization in the region, with regard to the degree of colonial expropriation of land, define the main differences in the land questions faced, particularly with regard to the nature of the unresolved national questions. Thus, where mild land expropriation and white settler occupation was obtained, for instance in Swaziland, Botswana, Zambia, and Malawi, less explosive land questions are found, although over time land concentration among blacks has become the issue. Extreme settlerist land expropriation in Zimbabwe, South Africa, Namibia, Mozambique and Angola led to a more protracted liberation struggle and persistent land conflicts. However, it is critical to recognise the regionally systemic nature of the land questions that the legacy of colonisation brought to Southern Africa. Namely, that land expropriation in parts of the region, generalized migrant labour mobilization (especially in Lesotho), and dispossession of land in the current free state of Malawi, the former Rhodesia and South Africa, were intertwined facets of the growth of South Africa's regional agro-industrial, mining and commercial farm enclaves, and of Zimbabwe and Zambian mining and agricultural enclaves in the middle of the last century.

The regions' economies founded on labour migration and enclave settlement patterns depended on the subsidizing of urban wage incomes by the so-called rural subsistence economies, based on marginal lands, as well as on the combined rural-urban livelihoods that define popular income flows in the regional economy. The linkage of agro-industrial capital in the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) region today reflects historically hegemonic settler interactions and common models of land and agrarian management, within an agro-industrial development strategy focused on European exports, and are mediated mainly through large South African capital and regional labour markets. This development model defines the highly inequitable income and consumption distribution patterns, and the persistence of marginalized rural and informal economies.

The form and outcome of the national liberation process has had varied implications on the manner in which the national question, the land questions and democracy have been addressed in Southern Africa. Specific national approaches to resolving the land question reflected the varied decolonization processes and mobilizations of the liberation movements, particularly since the mid-1970s, when détente emerged, and the waning 'end' of the cold war from the 1980s. Hence, the varied tactics of land reform experienced in Southern Africa since the 1970s (in the Lusophone zone), in the 1980s and early 1990s in Zimbabwe and Namibia, and the post-apartheid approaches (of South Africa, Zimbabwe and Namibia) as well as the neo-liberal land (essentially tenure) policy formation processes experienced since the 1960s in other SADC countries. Where liberation was decisively concluded, as in Mozambique and Angola, in spite of internal armed conflicts over the national question, fuelled by external destabilization, the land question appears to have been broadly resolved. Where liberation was partially concluded, as in the main settler territories of Zimbabwe, Namibia and South Africa, negotiated settlements left both the national and land question relatively unresolved. In particular, the racial dimensions of

the national question have not been adequately addressed, as we have seen recently. Thus, racially inequitable structures of wealth, income and land distribution remained intact, while liberal democratic constitutions and market principles protected these inequalities and inequities. This limited the scope and pace of land and agrarian reforms.

Moreover, the corporatist-liberal states that emerged, and their articulation within global capital through the IFIs (especially the Bretton Woods Institutions), the development aid structures (bilateral and multi-lateral donors and lending structures) and the trade system, eventually consolidated the neo-liberal framework used to address the regions' national questions and the land reform strategies adopted. The latter can be seen to have been interconnected by an increasing common neo-liberal ideology and common economic management strategies of externally imposed and homegrown SAP-type macro-economic stabilization, outward-looking trade liberalisation and de-regulation of domestic markets (land, labour and commodity). These processes led, over four decades, from Tanzania to Zimbabwe, to varying degrees of de-industrialization of growth enclaves that had been based on capital-intensive industrialization processes, since the 1950s, alongside an increasing dependence of most of the regions' economies on land for social survival. The lessons from this are common failure of land reforms and economic transitions, and narrow dissidences of approach to land reform and economic management.

Therefore, the specific trajectory of land reform processes in the SADC region needs to be examined in terms of the 40-year history of national liberation, if the apparently varied experiences of the evolving land questions facing Southern Africa and the land reform tactics used are to be understood. Whereas different socio-economic and political specificities need to be critically reflected upon, it is however the gradual shifts in the terrain of national independence and liberation struggles among the countries since the 1960s, in terms of their ideological and political mobilisation of social forces in response to imperial tactics, which distinguishes the specific land reform strategies experienced.

Thus, the SADC region of the 1960s and 1970s experienced a clear divide between the radical nationalist-cum-socialist orientation to land reform and liberal approaches. The former were based upon the nationalization of settler lands and foreign commercial/industrial structures of capital (as pursued in Tanzania and Zambia during the 1960s and early 1970s) and in Mozambique and Angola (from the mid-1970s). In contradistinction to this, the more liberal strategies of land reform were found during the same period in the smaller colonial 'protectorates', which predominantly faced indirect colonial rule accompanied by minor degrees of white settlerism alongside cheap migrant labour systems in Botswana, Swaziland, Lesotho and Malawi. In the latter countries, the land reform experiences involved a limited degree of market-based expropriation of settler lands, accompanied by market-led compensation with some colonial finance, as was the case in Swaziland and Botswana, for example. Such lands held by small settler communities were mainly indigenized with limited foreign and white minority-dominated large-scale land ownership and with estate farming, remaining alongside the emergence of state farms and the resilience of largely peasant and pastoral agrarian structures.

The nature and outcome of land reform radicalization also varied. Whereas Tanzania, Zambia and Mozambique had pursued socialistic land and agrarian reforms largely based upon state marketing systems, and land settlement and use reorganization (villagisation and rural development in Tanzania and resettlement and integrated development in Zambia), Mozambique followed land nationalization with even more intensive attempts at socialistic transformation of the land and agrarian question through state and cooperative farms. Angola, which started mired in civil war throughout, did not pursue further significant land reform after the land nationalisation from 1975. Civil war in the Lusophone territories, fuelled by South African destabilization and relative international isolation, however contained radical agrarian reforms there.

The liberal approach to the resolution of the land question varied slightly. It consisted mainly of limited market-led land re-distribution efforts and attempts to modernize peasant agriculture within a contradictory context of imbalanced public resources allocations. The latter were focused primarily on developing the large-scale indigenized and state capitalist farming sub-sector and its increasing incorporation into global agricultural export markets. This form of land and agrarian reform led to intensified land concentration in the various Southern African countries, a steady growth of agrarian social differentiation based on capitalist accumulation,

labour exploitation and rural marginalization, and a bi-modal agrarian structure, which became entrenched at different scales throughout the region.

### **The nature and significance of the peasantry in Southern Africa**

Peasantry –small-scale/family agriculturalists operating within the generalized system of commodity production– does not constitute a class in itself, but inherent in it are the antagonistic tendencies of proletarian and proprietor. The ideal-type ‘peasant household’ reproduces itself as both capital and labour simultaneously and in internal contradiction, but this combination of capital and labour is not spread evenly within the peasantry, for two reasons. First, the peasantry is differentiated between the rich, middle, and poor petty-commodity producers, a spectrum that ranges from the capitalist who employs labour-power, beyond the family, to the semi-proletarian who sells it. As such, the middle peasantry is the only category that embodies the ideal-type of petty-bourgeois production, managing to neither hire nor sell labour-power – and which in turn is rare (Moyo and Yeros, 2004). Second, the combination of capital and labour is not spread evenly within a single household either; differentiated by gender and generation, patriarchs will control the means of production, while women and children will provide unpaid labour. While this may appear on the surface as a ‘different’ mode of production, it has been argued convincingly that petty-commodity production is firmly embedded in the capitalist system and in fact is a normal feature of capitalist society, even if subordinate and unstable (Gibbon and Neocosmos, 1985).

Under capitalism, the peasantry remains in a state of flux, within the centre-periphery structure spawned by colonialism, as proletarianisation co-exists with peasantisation and semi-proletarianisation. The form and scale of the actually existing peasantry is both an empirical and an interpretive problem to be understood from the composition of household income by source, including non-exchangeable sources of sustenance, and from an analysis of household residential patterns, and between town and country. It has been argued that under structural adjustment peasants have become ‘problematic’, insofar as they are ‘multi-occupational, straddling urban and rural residences, [and] flooding labour markets’ (Bryceson, 2000). Yet, the peasantry has been problematic in this way for much of the twentieth century<sup>2</sup>.

Structural adjustment has been accompanied by intensified migration. Africa now has notched up the fastest rate of urbanization in the world (3.5% annually), and nearly 40% of the population is now urbanised. This fact is often used as proof that the land/agrarian question is losing its relevance. Migration does not mean full proletarianisation or permanent urbanisation, but the spreading of risk in highly adverse circumstances, with urbanization moving alongside de-industrialisation and retrenchments, illegal and unplanned settlement, so that, for example, half the urban population of Kenya and South Africa lives in slums (Moyo, *The land question in Africa*).

Migration is not merely one-way. Workers retrenched from mines and farms are also known to seek peasantisation, as recorded in a case study of rural ‘squattling’ in Zimbabwe (Yeros, 2002a), or as urbanites enter the land reform process (Moyo, *The new peasant question in Zimbabwe and South Africa*). Also, as opposed to secular urbanization, which Kay (2000) terms the ‘ruralization of urban areas’ and ‘urbanization of rural areas’, whereby rural and urban workers compete for both jobs, including agricultural jobs, and residential plots in both urban and rural areas. It has also been observed that retrenched workers from mines and industry have joined this struggle and sought to become peasants themselves (e.g. Bolivia where former miners have taken up coca production) (Petras, 1997).

Thus urbanization and proletarianisation are not definitive, and agrarian reform cannot be seen as anachronistic (see also Petras and Veltmeyer, 2001), nor must one underestimate the political significance of the countryside, in which the ‘end of land reform’ thesis writes off an alternative pattern of accumulation. The semi-proletarianisation thesis, under current agrarian change within the contemporary centre-periphery structure, does not provide for massive population relocations to the north (Moyo and Yeros, 2004).

The effect has been the rise of a richer class of peasants, compared to the rest, who became semi-proletarianised or landless. Full proletarianisation was generally forestalled, not least by state action, and rural households held onto a plot of land and maintained the dual income strategy of petty-commodity production and wage labour (Harriss, 1992; Breman, 2000). Rural

non-farm activities and markets proliferated, so that between 30 and 40% of household incomes are now derived from off-farm sources (Mooij, 2000). This dual trend suggests that 'the informal sector [in the urban economy] is not a stepping stone towards a better and settled urban life, but a temporary abode for labour which can be pushed back to its place of origin when no longer needed' (Breman, cited by Moyo and Yeros, 2004).

The transition to capitalism in the periphery has taken place under disarticulated accumulation and subordinated to the accumulation needs of the centre. In consequence, it has not been characterised by an 'American path' (Moyo and Yeros, 2004), as identified by Lenin – that is, a broad-based accumulation by petty-commodity producers 'from below' – but by varied paths (Ibid and see inter alia de Janvry, 1981; Byres, 1991; and Moyo, *The new peasant question in Zimbabwe and South Africa*). These include a 'junker path' of landlords-turned-capitalists in Latin America and Asia (outside East Asia), with its variant in the white-settler societies of Southern Africa, operating in tandem with transnational capital (whether landowning or not). Recently, with large agrarian capital it has also expanded and converted land away farming to wildlife management, or 'eco-tourism' ventures, a 'merchant path' comprising a variety of urban [petty] bourgeois elements with access to land, whether leasehold or freehold, via the state, the market or land reform, farming on a medium scale but integrated into export markets and global agro-industry (Moyo and Yeros, 2004).

Measures of 'poverty reduction', including 'integrated rural development programmes', sought to bolster this functional dualism at its moment of crisis from the 1980s, leading to the abandonment of the poverty agenda, and the tendency for proletarianisation to accelerate, although direct and indirect political action, and a series of social catastrophes, have (World Bank, 1990) even brought back land reform in its market-based form (Moyo and Yeros, 2004). Where the neoliberal social agenda failed spectacularly in Zimbabwe, large-scale re-peasantisation had taken place outside the control of the World Bank, and hence, because of penalties imposed from the north, a new pattern of 'accumulation from below' has not yet emerged (Yeros, 2002b; Moyo, *The new peasant question in Zimbabwe and South Africa*).

Various social hierarchies derived from gender, generation, race, caste and ethnicity have intensified under capitalism and functional dualism (Yeros, 2002b; Moyo, *The new peasant question in Zimbabwe and South Africa*), since disarticulated accumulation and its corollary of semi-proletarianisation provide the structural economic basis for the flourishing of powerful social hierarchies that either fuse with class (e.g. race, caste) or cut across it (gender), and reproduce apparently 'non-capitalist' forms of 'landlordism', even despite the historical culmination of the 'junker path' (Yeros, 2002b; Moyo, *The new peasant question in Zimbabwe and South Africa*). The synergy between class and race is notable in Zimbabwe and South Africa, where both historical domination and the process of resistance have fused class and race discourses (Moyo and Yeros, 2004).

Consequently, demands for agrarian reform have struck at the heart of the dominant national/cultural identities through which the conditions of super-exploitation are reproduced. In Africa, however, the issues of race and class have been strongly politicised for a longer period (Fanon, 2001; Cabral, 1979), and armed national liberation struggles against colonialism intensified them. The attainment of majority rule across the continent, within the neo-colonial framework, was characterised by the nurturing of small indigenous outward-looking bourgeoisies combined to defend nationally the disarticulated pattern of accumulation, while in Southern Africa neo-colonialism coincided with structural adjustment. National politics have been galvanised by rural and urban class struggles informed by growing class differentiation among blacks, and inter-capitalist conflict between emergent black bourgeoisies and established white capital, both outward looking, and both bidding over the land question. The result has been a stark bifurcation of the national question: on the one hand, black capital has confronted white capital, transforming the meaning of 'national liberation' in its own terms and hijacking land reform. On the other hand, the historical realities of class and race persist, characterised by functional dualism within a white supremacist framework, including the racialised landlordisms to which it gives rise (Moyo, 2001; Rutherford, 2001; Yeros, 2002b).

Gender hierarchy has been as intrinsic to functional dualism as race, male labour for mines and farms resting on a policy of confining women to the communal area by institutionalised means, under despotic chieftaincies (Channok, 1985; Schmidt, 1990; Mamdani, 1996). While chieftaincy has been transformed in variable ways, and women have entered the labour market in large numbers, they have continued to be a rural pillar of functional dualism. Under structural

adjustment, gender hierarchy has been thoroughly instrumentalised, as structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) have curtailed social services and relied on female reproductive labour, which in turn has intensified, as well as on child labour. At the same time, women have also been compelled to diversify the sources of household income. However, the traditional obstacles to access to land have persisted and remained subject to patriarchal kinship relations, while the illegal use of land has in many cases proliferated (Moyo, 1995; Agarwal, 1994; Deere and León, 2001).

The above trends underlie the emergence of scattered but significant land conflicts in the region, a direct negative outcome of neo-liberal land reforms, which tends to fuel renewed struggles over national and democracy questions. The rest of this paper examines these land questions and land reform experiences in Southern Africa, including the nature of the neo-radical fast-track land reforms of Zimbabwe, and the regional implications of these for the future land questions in the SADC region.

## **Land concentration, privatisation and external control in Southern Africa**

### **Historical context of the land question in Southern Africa**

The overriding land question facing Southern Africa is that little progress has been achieved in the implementation of land reform, especially with regard to redressing colonially derived and post-independence unequal land ownership, discriminatory land use regulations, and insecure land tenure systems, which marginalize the majority of rural and urban poor populations. The legacy of racially unequal land control, which confronted mainly the former settler colonies, was at independence maintained through constitutions that guaranteed the protection of private property by sanctifying willing-seller-willing-buyer approaches to the redistribution of freehold land. Those SADC states, with legacies of limited settler colonialism, have tended to face the challenges of promoting equitable legal and administrative systems of land tenure security and effective land management within a context of growing land concentration and agrarian class differentiation.

A major underlying problem which confronts these land questions in Southern Africa is the continued increase in population among the peasantries in marginal and congested lands, without a net increase in the access to the maldistributed and underutilized arable lands, and a slow rate of growth in land productivity and agricultural intensification. Discriminatory land use policies and practices, and land tenure laws, have tended to encourage underutilization of land or inefficient land use among large-scale farmers, who nonetheless have high levels of productivity on limited parts of the land they control. Yet, expanding the number of landholders through land redistribution could redress the land shortages and the patterns of insecurity of tenure that arise from maldistribution of land. Instead, Southern African land reform policies have focused on reforming the regulation of land use and environmental management practices among smallholders, as well as customary tenures towards market-based land tenure systems, in the belief that these can lead to increased agricultural investment and intensification.

A persistent feature of the land reform question in the sub-region is therefore that racial imbalance and historic grievances over land expropriation provide a binding force for the political mobilization of social grievance and growing poverty for land reform. Independence, political settlement and reconciliation policies in Zimbabwe, Namibia and South Africa have thus failed to curb racial conflict in a context where the peace dividend of the mid-1990s has not led to economic growth throughout the sub-region, nor delivered structural changes that include the majority into the formal economy. Not surprisingly, even in the non-settler territories, the land problem and its racial foundations resonate. Thus, conflict over land tends to be fueled by ideological and land policy discourses which, in Southern Africa, have not resolved the question of whether and to what degree the rights held by whites over land that had been expropriated historically are valid and socially and politically legitimate (Moyo, 2003).

Land reform discourses are further fueled by the myth that the freehold landholding system and private land markets are more efficient and superior to customary (so-called “communal”) land tenure systems. This myth tends to justify the preservation of unequally held land in the dual tenure systems, while incorrectly arguing that land reform *per se* undermines food security and exports, as well as the confidence of the investors in the economy. While this may be correct where conflictive land transfers obtain, as in Zimbabwe since 2000, this could be a short

to medium-term transitional problem, depending on the support given to new settlers. In this context, where smallholder farmers are regarded as being less efficient in land use, productivity and ecological practices, intrinsically, than large-scale white farmers, who hold large chunks of the prime lands and other resources, this prophecy can be sustained by the withholding of agricultural resources from so-called subsistence farmers. That is, land reform can only succeed to the degree that attendant resources are reallocated by the state and through appropriate market interventions.

Land conflicts today result from grievances over and struggles for access to land and natural resources by both the poor and emerging black capitalist classes. Such grievances reflect the deep roots of social polarisation along racial and nationality lines. These arise historically from the discriminatory treatment of blacks on farms, mines and towns through a proletarianisation process based on land alienation and cheap labour mobilisation, and the persistence of racially inequitable development. The increasing radicalization of land acquisition approaches in Namibia and South Africa, and the growth of the tactic of land occupations in the SADC region since the 1990s, are manifestations of this deeply rooted phenomenon of common grievances over the unresolved land questions, and the failure of markets or landowners to reallocate land to a broader constituency.

## **Racial and foreign land distribution patterns**

The existing structure and patterns of land inequalities in Southern Africa are based upon a relatively unique racial distribution of socio-economic features including population, wealth, income and employment patterns (Moyo, 2003). Land expropriation was rampant in most Southern African countries, and only Botswana had no white settlers by 1958. On the other hand, Angola, Lesotho and Zambia had lower percentages of alienated land. In terms of settler population, Namibia seems to have had a significant white settler population, mainly composed of the Afrikaners and Germans, in 1960, with 19%. The greatest white settler land alienation occurred in South Africa, where 87% of the land was alienated in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

Although at independence the white settler populations have tended to decrease, the proportion of land possessed by white minorities has tended not to decrease proportionately in former settler lands, while there has been a gradual increase in foreign landholdings in countries such as Mozambique, Zambia and Malawi, in the context of renewed interest by private international capital in tourism based on the control of natural resources (Moyo, 2003).

Countries such as South Africa and Namibia are confronted with unequal land holdings with titled land in the hands of a few white commercial farmers. This pattern is excessive in South Africa, where 60,000 white farmers, who make up only 5% of the white population, own almost 87% (85.5 million) of the land. Only 20,000 white commercial farmers produce 80% of the gross agricultural product. A further 40,000, including some 2,000 black farmers, produce 15%, while 500,000 families living in the former homelands produce an estimated 5%. At least 12 million blacks inhabit 17.1 million hectares of land, and no more than 15% (or 2.6 million hectares) of this land is potentially arable (Wildschut and Hulbert, 1998). Thus, whites own 6 times more land in terms of the quantity of land available and its quality (Wildschut and Hulbert, 1998).

However, Namibia has the highest number of white settlers, with about 8% of the total population. Commercial land under freehold title comprises approximately 6,300 farms, belonging to 4,128 mostly white farmers, and measuring about 36.2 million hectares. The freehold land covers 44% of available land and 70% of the most productive agricultural land, covering 36 million hectares. Only 2.2 million hectares of the commercial farmland belong to black farmers. By contrast, communal lands comprise 138,000 households with an area of 33.5 million hectares, which is only 41% of the land available.

In countries with predominant customary land tenure systems, there is a tendency to high population densities on land regarded as poor around largely mountainous areas and scarce arable land. In fact, in Swaziland and Malawi, the struggle for equitable land ownership invokes the control by traditional leaders over land allocation (Mashinini, 2000). Increased privatisation of state lands as part of the foreign investment drive has crowded out the poor onto the worst lands. In Mozambique, although all land is constitutionally state land, "privatisation" started in 1984 as part of the implementation of the structural adjustment programmes. This has created grounds for racial animosity, as foreigners and white South Africans tend to dominate this



investment. Confrontation over land in Zimbabwe has seen the emigration of white Zimbabweans to Mozambique<sup>3</sup>. Mozambican officials have called for greater social integration of incoming white farmers to avoid creation of “white islands” where commercial development outpaces that of the indigenous populations who surround these new settlers.

In Zimbabwe, before the fast-track land reform programme, most of the freehold lands were in the hands of 4,500 whites (comprising 0.03% of the population) and located in the most fertile parts of the country, with the most favorable climatic conditions and water resources. White farmers controlled 31% of the country's freehold land, or about 42% of the agricultural land, while 1.2 million black families subsisted on 41% of the country's area of 39 million hectares.

A diverse and differentiated structure of land tenure and land use also exists among the regions with white population. Racial ownership of land ranges from family landowners to a few white-dominated large companies –most of which are multinational companies with strong international linkages. Whilst these companies tend to under-utilize most of their land, it is however the nationality and citizenship of large landowners that is mostly contested. In Zimbabwe, it is estimated that between 20,000 to 30,000 white Zimbabweans are British and South Africans with dual citizenship<sup>4</sup>. While the definition of who is indigenous remains contested, even for non-white members of minority groups who are citizens by birth or through naturalization, absentee land ownership exacerbates feelings against foreign land ownership. In Namibia, corporate ownership of land hides the influx of foreign landowners, particularly those who are shifting land use from agricultural use to tourism.

Foreign land ownership has a historical and contemporary dimension to it. Past colonial land expropriation tends now to be reinforced by new land concessions to foreign investors. This tends to be complicated socially and politically by the physical absence of many foreign large-scale landowners. Foreign landowners increasingly use stock holding land tenure arrangements for the control of land, especially in the growing eco-tourist industry, thus increasing the globalization of the region's land question (Moyo, 2000). The rural poor are thus marginalized from their own landscape, and livelihood systems are undermined.

The market paradigm shift of the 1980s saw new waves of migration by white large farmers into Zambia, Mozambique and the Democratic Republic of Congo. This migration, encouraged by neo-liberal investment policies, has led to increased foreign land ownership in many countries and pressures for increased private land tenure property regimes in order to protect investments.

The agricultural sector has been the prime target of such investment through lucrative incentives provided for foreign investment, especially in export processing zones.

## **Contested settler notions of land size and peasant marginalisation**

Per capita arable land ownership per household has been declining due to the increase in population in the regions' customary tenure areas, while the few white and some black large-scale farmers own most of the best arable land in farms that are oversized. Thus, according to IFAD (2001), poverty tends to be concentrated in households with farm sizes under 1ha, and especially under 0.5ha. While poor black smallholders and the landless call for increased land redistribution, rural and urban black elites also call for access to large over-sized commercial farms, as it happened recently in Zimbabwe, where the prescribed land size ceilings are based upon outdated notions of the land sizes required for “viable” commercial farming<sup>5</sup>.

Farm sizes in the region reflect the trends in land ownership. In Namibia, the average white LSCF farm size is 5,700 hectares. In Zimbabwe, the average was 2,500, with variation between NR II to V<sup>6</sup>. In the communal areas, the average farm size is around 2 hectares, and in resettlement, it is 5 hectares. In South Africa 28.5% of the farms were larger than 1,000 hectares (Wildschut and Hulbert, 1998). In Malawi 40% of the smallholders cultivate less than 0.5ha, with an average farm size of 0.28ha (IFAD, 2001). The areas inhabited by smallholders have the highest poverty.

The resettlement programmes in the region are proceeding on the basis of small-sized farms for blacks averaging less than 10 hectares of arable land in areas such as NR II in Zimbabwe. Land reform based on controlling farm sizes through ceilings has not been pursued in most of the countries.

This leaves a few landowners holding excessively large tracts of land. Using the cut-off point of over 10,000 hectares owned either through company or individual title, or as single or multiple farms, about 66 landowners (with 158 farms) occupied over two million hectares of Zimbabwe's land by 1998 (Moyo, 2003). Most of these farms are multiple owned company farms. Multiple farm ownership is thus a decided feature of Zimbabwe's landed gentry, whether company or individually owned.

The criterion used to determine viable farm sizes is based on a legacy of white settler notions of the 'small scale' being subsistence oriented, and the 'commercial' being large-scale white farms.

Although the categorisation is posited as a function of different resource levels, there is a fundamental class and racial basis for its definition. Historically, large farms have prescribed higher levels of income targets for whites, against lower 'subsistence' incomes for blacks. The latter were required to provide cheap labour to supplement incomes. Large-sized plots are also said to allow for multiple land uses at a 'commercial' scale, and to allow some of the land to remain fallow for some time. They are also considered necessary for mechanised agriculture, on the false grounds that economies of scale obtain in farming. Yet blacks have historically been unable to acquire large-scale machinery through institutionalised resource allocation biases and financial institution discrimination. However, whilst many of the large farms so supported are productive by the region's standards, most of their lands are underutilized.

In order to conceal land under-utilization and speculative uses of land, white commercial farmers and multinational companies have tended to put their land under wildlife ranching, even though the social and economic benefits of such uses remain contested (Moyo, 2000). Nonetheless investing in game ranching, tourism in the form of conservancy requires the continued exclusion from large areas of the poor, and in some countries the enclosure of newly consolidated lands to the same end. Various shareholding structures that remain in the clique of white farmers exclude both elite and poor blacks, who contest such arrangements through various strategies, including land occupations. The tourism sector has justified the exclusion of blacks by arguing that it is too technical for black smallholders' land management, and that its marketing requirements are too sophisticated for them. It is argued that the latter should instead concentrate on less technical crops such as food grains rather than horticulture export crops (World Bank, 1991; 1995).

This racist notion is buttressed by the belief that blacks only aim to secure home consumption and residence, and that they do not require land for commercial uses. However, the output performance of smallholders, including resettled black farmers and those who have invested in peri-urban areas, demonstrates that with adequate access to land blacks contribute substantially to domestic and export markets. Unfortunately, racism, in some donor circles as well, continues to pursue the misplaced notion that when blacks obtain large-sized land through state support, it is only a reflection of unproductive cronyism rather than a de-racialisation process. However, since historically whites obtained large-sized land aimed at commercialising farming through the same procedures, such notions are unfounded.

These contradictions of access to land based on race, class and nationality cleavages are thus a fundamental source of conflict over demands for land in a region where the hegemonic neoliberal ideology in fact promotes agrarian capitalism, with lip service paid to poverty reduction-focused land reform.

## **Land reform experiences in the SADC states**

### **The demand for land reform**

The demand for land redistribution, in terms both of redressing historical and racially grounded inequities and of growing needs by both the black poor (rural and urban) and black elites, has been a consistent feature of Southern African politics and policymaking. Recently, most of these countries have been formulating land policies in response to both pressures for redistribution.

These efforts are dominated by official perspectives that tend to emphasize the conversion of customary tenure systems to private freehold land tenure systems. Most official analyses of the land question have, however, tended to underestimate the nature and scale of demand for

land redistribution, and to ignore the racial tensions that have persisted as a result of the unfinished land reform agenda.

The demand for land reform takes various forms and arises from various sources. These include formal and informal demands, legal and underground, or illegal, forms of demand for land redistribution, and demands that may be based upon the restitution of historic rights, or contemporary demands based upon different needs. The different socio-political organizations that mediate such demands include civil society organizations, farmers' unions, political parties, War Veterans Associations, business representatives' associations, community-based organizations and traditional structures. Such structures are central to the evolution of the demand for land redistribution. The social content of these structures, however, is decidedly racially polarized in Southern Africa, while the class composition of the "visible" policy actors has been elitist.

Since the decolonization of Zimbabwe, South Africa and Namibia, the debate on land reform has mainly been focused on market instruments of land transfer. Despite broad consensus among governments, the landless, landowners and the international community on the need for land reform in the sub-region, land reform remains limited. The onset of structural adjustment programmes, as well as multiparty "democratization" in Southern Africa since the 1980s, have tended to reinforce the liberal political and market dimensions of debate on the land questions. In the process of economic liberalisation, however, informal rural political demands for land, including land occupations and natural resource poaching, have remained a critical source of advocacy for radical land reform, and, indeed, have succeeded in keeping land reform on the agenda (Moyo, 2001). Over time, the salient land demands of the black middle classes and elites have tended to be advanced within civil society organizations and both the ruling and opposition parties, within a liberal political and human rights framework, which leaves the fundamental issues of economic restructuring and redistribution of resources to the market (Moyo, 2001).

Thus, the predominantly urban-led civil society has not formally embraced the land reform agenda, perhaps due to the enduring middle-class basis of its leadership, especially in the NGO movement.

### **Limited civil society advocacy for land reform**

This has relegated rural social movements on land reform to informal politics, while giving prominence to more organized, middle-class civic groups and policy organizations that typically advocate market-based methods of land reform and liberal civic and political rights issues. Yet, the race question of land reform persistently dominates land reform struggles and debate, because the land to be redistributed is mainly expected to come from land largely owned by whites, while the black potential beneficiaries compete for redistribution and affirmative action along class lines, but in the common name of healing the wounds of past grievances.

This raises contradictory tendencies in the ideologies and foci of social movements between those who struggle for access to social (land and broader resource redistribution) rights and those focused on political (civic and human) rights. Thus, most civil society organisations, which are generally one-issue oriented in their advocacy, have tended to divide between those with structuralist (redistributionist) and proceduralist (governance) perspectives of social and economic change, even though in reality both issues need to be addressed in calibrated combination. Over the years, however, the formal demand for radical or merely extensive land reform has tended to be submerged, especially in recent struggles for democratization, by the proceduralist thrust of civil society activism, much of which is ensconced within a neoliberal framework. This is reinforced by the fact that the balance of external aid, in Zimbabwe, for example, has tilted in the last five years towards the support of governance activism.

While such support is necessary, this trend has served to highlight mainly the issues of human rights and electoral transgressions by the state, to the detriment of the redress of structural and social rights issues. The exceptions here are food aid and HIV/AIDS and health, which defy the dichotomy and tend to be considered as basic humanitarian support.

Civil society discourses on land reform, therefore, to the extent that they go beyond rule of law issues, have been focused on a critique of methods of land acquisition and allocation, without offering alternatives to land market acquisition and expropriation instruments or

mobilizing the more deserving beneficiaries of land reform in support of extensive land reform in the face of resistance by landlords and other stakeholders. Because of the polarization of society on political party and ideological grounds, in Zimbabwe, for example, engaging the state in furtherance of land reform has been sacrificed for rejecting the administrative processes and legal rules applied in land reform, despite legal challenges and resistance. Yet, there is a *fait accompli* redistribution on the grounds (see also Nyoni, 2004) that this trend of civil society land advocacy is not conjunctural or limited to the Zimbabwe experience.

Historically, Southern Africa in general has not had an organized civil society that has made radical demands for land reform or land redistribution. Under colonial rule the land cause was led by the liberation movements, and in the 1970s it was pursued by means of armed struggle (Chitiyo, 2000). In the independence period, civil society land advocacy has been constrained by their predominantly middle-class, social welfarist and neoliberal developmentalist values, which are in turn dependent on international aid. Meanwhile, formal rural and urban community-based organizations which seek land tend to be appendages of middle-class driven intermediary civil society organizations, while local land occupation movements have tended to be shunned by them (Moyo, 1998). The rural operations of NGOs within a neoliberal framework have thus been characterized by demands for funds for small “development” projects aimed at a few selected beneficiaries (Moyo, Raftopolous and Makumbe, 2000), and have left a political and social vacuum in the leadership of the land reform agenda.

Advocacy for land reform in the region has increasingly been dominated by former liberation movements’ associations, scattered traditional leaders and spiritual mediums, special-interest groups and other narrowly based structures rather than by broadly-based civil society organisations, as we have seen in Zimbabwe, Namibia and South Africa. In the latter, a few left-leaning NGO groups have supported the formation of the Landless People’s Movement (LPM), although the contradictions of white middle-class intellectual leadership of black people’s landless structures, and the transclass and nationalist nature of the interests in land, have become evident in the slow maturation of a nation-wide radical land reform agenda.

Black indigenization or affirmative action lobbies, some with ethno-regional and gender foci, have on the other hand re-focused the land reform agenda, including the demand for the “return of lost lands” more towards the de-racialization of the ownership base of commercial farmland, at times as a racial substitution formula for capitalist farming (Moyo, 2001). So far, however, a dual approach of land redistribution to large black and poor peasants remains on the formal or official land reform agenda, even if resource allocations have tended to favour elites. However, large white farmer organizations, black technocrats, and many NGOs, have tended to support the commercial-farmer orientation of land redistribution in general, given their general tendency to believe in the inefficiency of small farmers. This has shifted policy discourses on the criteria for access to land, refocusing the redistribution vision from the “landless” and “insecure” towards the “capable”, and presumed “efficient”, indigenous agrarian capitalists, within the terms of the neoliberal global development paradigm.

This is exemplified, for instance, even in the similarity between the bi-focal land allocation policies of the opposed political parties, in the case of the Zanu-PF-led government of Zimbabwe and the MDC (MDC, 2004). The former talks about providing the needy (the landless and ‘congested’) and the ‘capable’ with land as defined by the A1 and A2 allocation schemes respectively, while the latter promises to give according to need and ability. Neither defines formally the proportionate class-based tilt intended in the land allocations, although in Zimbabwe 35% of the land has so far been given to the capable elites, which number less than 20,000, compared to 130,000 ‘needy’ beneficiaries. This however suggests also that there is a common intra-elite bipartisan interest in a capitalist agrarian class project. These terms of the land reform agenda tend also to be dictated by the favourable disposition of the middle-class and elite dominated political party and civil society to external (global) markets, buttressed by optimistic expectations of the promise of foreign investment. The latter, it seems, tends to be expected to obviate the need for extensive redistributive land reform, and the belief exists that the latter could be substituted by other economic development benefits, including employment creation. But employment growth remains appallingly low and informalised and well below survival wages among the majority, while the rural remain marginalised.

## Neoliberal land reform programme design

In this context, the objectives and strategies for land redistribution adopted in the region vary. Land redistribution programmes have tended to emphasize rehabilitating and politically stabilizing countries torn by armed struggles. The generic objectives of land reform in most Southern African countries tend to include: to decongest overpopulated areas; to increase the base of productive agriculture; to rehabilitate people displaced by war; to resettle squatters, the destitute, the landless; to promote equitable distribution of agricultural land; to de-racialise commercial agriculture. These are mostly underpinned by the aim of addressing historical injustices of colonial land expropriation and to assert the right of access of 'indigenes'. Land redistribution initiatives in the region have tended to be constrained by existing legal, institutional and constitutional frameworks, which have led to costly and slow processes of land acquisition and transfer of land rights to various beneficiaries. Land redistribution policies have tended to be influenced by market-oriented approaches to land acquisition and proscribed by the legal challenge, by large landowners, of the land expropriation mechanism, while the negotiated voluntary transfers of large amounts of land on a significant scale has not occurred. The experience with land redistribution in the SADC region has been in general based upon four inter-related tactical approaches.

The dominant approach, used mainly in Zimbabwe and Namibia before the implementation of compulsory land acquisition, is the *state-centred but market-based* approach to land transfers. Land was purchased by the state for redistribution following willing-seller-willing-buyer procedures. The private sector led land identification and supply through the market, and the central government was a reactive buyer choosing land on offer. Governments identify the demand and match the private supply with beneficiaries selected by its officials. The land restitution approach followed in South Africa is essentially a state initiative in which government pays mostly market prices for land claims of individuals and communities in a limited land rights and time-bound framework. These programmes were slow in redistributing land, except during the early years in Zimbabwe, when this was accompanied by extensive land occupations of abandoned white lands.

The use of *compulsory land acquisition by the state with compensation* for land and improvements has been pursued in the region since the 1990s, mainly in Zimbabwe. This approach involves direct intervention by the government in the identification and acquisition of land at market prices, and governments tend to manage the resettlement process, although settler selection is generally more locally controlled. Zimbabwe has used a mass compulsory acquisition strategy, and up to 7,000 farm properties have been gazetted for acquisition between 1992 and 2001. Litigation by landowners against compulsory acquisition has been a key constraint. In South Africa, a few cases of compulsory acquisition have recently evolved out of its land restitution programme, given the resistance of landowners to part with their land, while legislation was amended in 2003 to enable smoother land expropriation. The South African government argues that this approach will be used sparingly. In early 2004, the Namibian government initiated legal measures to expropriate eight farms, three of which are intended to assuage urban landlessness, while some of the others are being expropriated in response to the eviction of farm workers from their farms by their landlords.

A third approach to land redistribution that has been tried to a limited degree in both South Africa and Zimbabwe, in the context of testing "alternative" approaches, is the *market-assisted land reform* approach, espoused mainly by the World Bank. This land reform approach is meant to be led by the private sector, communities and NGOs, which identify land for transfer or beneficiaries to purchase land within a market framework. This framework of land acquisition seems to favour the large landowners' compensation requirements given the land price response to demand. However, black communities in the sub-region resist paying for land, which they feel was expropriated through conquest. Very little land has been redistributed through this approach so far, mainly in South Africa. Efforts to follow this approach in Zimbabwe during 1998 and 1999 were aborted before they took off as the actors tended to fail to agree on financing the process, on the combined use of market and compulsory acquisition, and on approaches to the identification of agreed amounts of land and beneficiaries for redistribution.

Finally there is the *community-led land self-provisioning* (Moyo, 2000) strategy, mainly in the form of land occupations or invasions by potential beneficiaries. This approach has tended to be either state facilitated and formalized, or repressed by the state at various points in time (Moyo, 2000; Raftopoulos, 2003; Alexander, 2003 and Marongwe, 2003). As a formal strategy to land

redistribution, it has not been implemented on a large scale in most of the countries, except in Zimbabwe during the first four years after independence, and in 2000 under different political and economic conditions, with different formal responses by the state in the two periods, and its repression during the mid-1980s to mid-1990s. Occasional isolated land occupations have been reported in Malawi, Botswana and South Africa. The latter however experienced large urban land occupations between the 1980s and early 1990s, which are being formalized in home ownership schemes. This however is not a formal government policy in the SADC region, and tends in fact to be officially discouraged in general.

These various approaches to land redistribution increasingly tend to be used in combination, although the market-based approach has remained dominant. Recent donor support for land reform tends to favour the as yet untested market-assisted approach to land reform, and is intended to provide an alternative to the pursuit of compulsory acquisition on a large scale or to pure willing-seller-willing-buyer approaches. However, most of the Southern African countries facing demands for land reform may require strong state intervention in land markets given the legacy of inequitable social capital and the control of financial markets.

Given the general slow pace of land reform in the region, persistent popular demands for land redistribution in terms of both redressing historical and racially-grounded inequities and in terms of the growing demands by both the black poor (rural and urban) and black elites for land to enhance their livelihoods and accumulation strategies respectively, have consistently resurfaced on the Southern Africa political and land policy agendas. These structures have tended to be central to influencing the evolution of the demand for land redistribution both in collaboration and in confrontation with the state.

The social and political mobilisation for land reform in Southern Africa has heightened racial and class polarisation and contradictions around approaches to implementing land reform within a context of democratisation. For example, in Zimbabwe, war veterans, landless peasants, and the urban poor, utilised land occupations, in collaboration with dominant elements in the state and ruling party, to force the government to pursue official compulsory land acquisition in a fast-track programme. In South Africa, the demand for land has mainly been in the urban and peri-urban areas, given that 70% of the population is urbanised. However, the demand for land in the rural areas is also growing and leading to polarisation at the political party level and between white farmers and blacks demanding access to the land of their ancestors, backed by significant violence against landowners. The emergence in South Africa of a landless people's movement demanding land redistribution for workers and peasants, with an explicit threat to boycott the ANC in elections, has had the effect (alongside the pressures from Zimbabwe's experiences) of bringing greater urgency to that government's land reform initiatives.

Official and formal studies tend to underestimate the demand for land, especially in Zimbabwe, South Africa and Namibia. Recent experiences of rural land occupations in Zimbabwe and in peri-urban South Africa and Namibia show the intensity of popular demand for land redistribution among a diverse range of beneficiaries such as the rural landless, former refugees, war veterans, the poor and former commercial farm workers, the urban poor and black elite (Moyo, 2001; Kinsey, 1999). Thus, while land reform has been rural-oriented and focused on promoting national food security and agricultural development, urban demand has also come to the fore. The cutting edge of demands for land reform at this stage thus rests on expanding the access and rights to land by the poor, the landless and disadvantaged sections of society such as women and farm workers, and a nascent black agrarian capitalist class.

## **The scale and nature of land redistribution**

The scale and social composition of those benefiting from land redistribution thus far has been narrow. Since independence in 1990, only about 30,000 black Namibians have been resettled. Of these, 6,515 only have been resettled on commercial farms. The rest have been resettled in communal areas. Land reform in South Africa has gradually picked up pace, although less than 3% of the white-held lands have been redistributed. By 1998, Zimbabwe had redistributed 3.6 million hectares to 70,000 families, during the first five years of independence. Between 2000 and 2004, about 130,000 families have been resettled on about 10 million hectares of land expropriated under the fast-track programme. However, much of the acquired land is still being contested by landowners, and the provision of infrastructure and services to

the resettled families has been minimal, given the lack of state resources during the attendant economic downturn.

The demand for land redistribution increasingly includes the emerging black middle classes, such as business executives, agricultural graduates, academics, including civil servants. The key issue now facing the region's land reform policies is how to balance the control and access to land by existing large-scale landholders who underutilize their land, the demands of new small and medium-scale aspiring farmers. De-racialising commercial farming is a policy perspective that has been gaining importance in this context, and to a critical extent at the expense of the landless.

In Zimbabwe, land reform in the 1990s promoted emergent black large-scale farmers in what appeared less as a resettlement than a land reallocation programme intending to redress racial imbalances. Thus, state land had been used to facilitate access to land by about 400 middle-class blacks, while another 1,000 blacks used their own resources to purchase about 760,000 hectares.

By 1999, black elites held about 11% of Zimbabwe's commercial farmlands. The fast-track process then added 19,000 more new small to medium commercial-scale farmers, as discussed below. In South Africa and Namibia, policies have also sought to create and empower black commercial farmers as an integral aspect of land reform.

In this context, land reform has tended to marginalize critical vulnerable and organized groups. For example, special groups such as war veterans in Zimbabwe and elsewhere have received particular attention in policy, but their prescribed quota of resettlement land has generally not been met. Whereas significant progress has begun to be seen in recognizing women's land rights in policy, in practice women's land rights have remained marginalized at law in most of the countries. Farm workers' land rights, especially to residential and farming land, have tended to be marginalized in all the former settler territories. In Zimbabwe, the fast-track land reform programme has accommodated less than 3% of the farm workers, while in Namibia and South Africa landlords continue to evict them at will.

## **Conclusions: regional dimensions of radical land reform**

The effects of the Zimbabwean land reforms since 2000, as a dissident model of radical land reform on the Southern Africa region, need to be recognised at various levels, although there is a tendency by some to dwell only on some of the impacts leading to a narrow discourse on this matter (Moyo, *Fast track land and agrarian reform*). By far the most commonly considered impact has been the expectation that the process of land occupations as a popular strategy for redressing land grievances and hunger might replicate itself widely, especially in former settler states such as South Africa (Cousins, 2000; Rutherford, 2001; Lahiff, 2002), in Namibia and even Kenya. The formation of the Landless Peoples Movement of South Africa in 2001 was a significant sign of the prospect for the diffusion of land occupations<sup>7</sup>, since the urban land occupations in Johannesburg took place during 2001. These judgments all seem premature, given that the political coalition for majority rule appears to be relatively intact, and that the economic growth prospects of South Africa still look promising, despite the quite high levels of unemployment, poverty and wealth inequalities facing that country.

The greatest incidence of land occupations in South Africa had already shown itself in the late 1980s during the political struggle and turmoil at that time, while sporadic land occupations had been observed in the late 1990s in Botswana (Molomo, 2002), in Namibia and in Malawi (Kanyongolo, 2004). These incidents had coincided with the low profile and sporadic land occupations that Zimbabwe had experienced at that time. Given the strict evictions of land occupiers that the South African government had begun to pursue since majority rule, it could be confidently claimed that these would not spread widely there or elsewhere in the region, and that instead the SADC governments were now more intent on pursuing orderly land reform (Lahiff, 2002).

There has been a growing tendency among Southern African governments to rapidly develop comprehensive National Land Policies to pre-empt the Zimbabwe scenario, as we have seen in Malawi, Swaziland and Lesotho in 2001, and in Botswana, Zambia and Angola in 2003 (Lahiff, 2002). These national policies are yet to be implemented. There have also been efforts to improve the land redistribution policy and strategy in South Africa and Namibia since 2001. In

both these countries, small-scale attempts to utilise land expropriation laws were undertaken without much success during that period. In South Africa, streamlining the bureaucratic procedures for land restitution has since increased the pace of land transfers. Namibia has moved quite swiftly between 2001 and 2003 to institute a land tax which, together with the threat of land expropriation, may be expected to release more land for redistribution. Both countries are introducing regulations which limit the purchase of land by foreigners, particularly absentee landlords in the Namibia case. It also appears that donors are increasing their funding of these two countries' land reforms.

In most of these countries, the most salient land policy change, however, and perhaps the one with the greatest potential to re-concentrate landholdings, has been the legal provisions introduced to enable customary land tenures, under which the majority of people live, to lease out land to developers through long-term leasehold and natural resources concession arrangements. These policy developments largely emulate the Mozambique and Botswana customary tenure arrangements and expand the land lease practices already found in state-held land and public natural resources property regimes. These policy directions have received much international donor support, while the SADC is currently in the process of adopting a Regional Land Reform Technical Facility intended to mobilise aid and regional expertise to improve land policy formation processes (Lahiff, 2002).

In conclusion, land reform policies in Southern Africa seem to be evolving through the interactive use of market and compulsory approaches to land acquisition for redistribution, restitution and tenure reform to both the landless and an emerging black agrarian bourgeoisie.

Official land reform policies are increasingly being forced to respond to growing popular demand for land. An important lesson to be learnt from the political independence settlements in the settler territories of the sub-region is that, by not sufficiently addressing the problem of inequitable land and natural resource ownership, the down-stream entrenchment of unequal racial economic opportunities ensuing from such control, in economies facing slow employment growth, is likely to fuel agitation for radical land reform. Thus, land redistribution, restitution and tenure reform to redress historical grievances, social justice and poverty are crucial ingredients of reconciliation and development, and essential to the resolution of the national question and democratization processes.

## Bibliography

- Agarwal, B 1994 *A Field of One's Own: Gender and Land Rights in South Asia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).
- Alexander, J. 2003 "'Squatters', veterans and the state in Zimbabwe" in Hammar, Amanda; Raftopoulos, Brain and Jensen, Stig (eds.) *Zimbabwe's unfinished business: rethinking land, state and nation in the context of crisis* (Harare: Weaver Press).
- Breman, J. 2000 "Labour and Landlessness in South and South-east Asia" in Bryceson, D. et al. (eds.) *Disappearing Peasantries?* (London: ITDG Publishing).
- Bryceson, D. 2000 "Peasant Theories and Small Holder Policies: Past and Present" in Bryceson, D. (ed.) *Disappearing Peasantries?* (London: ITDG Publishing).
- Bryceson, D.; Kay, C. and Mooij, J. (eds.) 2000 *Disappearing Peasantries? Rural Labour in Africa, Asia, and Latin America* (London: ITDG Publishing).
- Byres, T. J. 1991 "The agrarian question and differing forms of capitalist transition: an essay with reference to Asia" in Breman, J. and Mundle, S. (eds.) *Rural transformation in Asia* (Delhi: Oxford University Press).
- Cohen, R. 1991 "Peasants to Workers and Peasant-Workers in Africa" in *Contested Domains: Debates in International Labour Studies* (London and Atlantic Highlands, N.J.: Zed Books).
- Cabral, A. 1979 "Unity and Struggle" in *Monthly Review Press* (New York).



- Channock, M. 1985 *Law, custom and social order: the colonial experience in Malawi and Zambia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).
- Chitiyo, T. 2000 "Land violence and compensation: reconceptualising Zimbabwe's land and war veterans debate" in *Track Two* (South Africa) Vol. 9, N° 1.
- Cousins, B. 2000 "The Zimbabwe crisis: lessons for the Region. Could Land Invasions happen here too?". Seminar paper, PLAAS, School of Government, UWC, South Africa.
- De Janvry, A. 1981 *The Agrarian Question and Reformism in Latin America* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press).
- Deere, Carmen D. and León, Magdalena 2001 "Who Owns the Land? Gender and Land Titling Programmes in Latin America" in *Journal of Agrarian Change*, 1: 3.
- Fanon, F. 2001 (1961) *The Wretched of the Earth* (London: Penguin Books).
- First, R. 1983 *Black Gold: The Mozambican Miner, Proletarian and Peasant* (Brighton: Harvester).
- Gibbon, P. and Neocosmos, M. 1985 "Some problems in the political economy of 'African Socialism'" in Bernstein, Henry and Campbell, Bonnie (eds.) *Contradictions of accumulation in Africa* (Beverly Hills/London/New Delhi: Sage).
- Harriss, J. 1992 "Does the 'Depressor' still work? Agrarian structure and development in India: a review of evidence and argument" in *Journal of Peasant Studies* (UK) Vol 19, N° 2.
- IFAD 2001 (1999) "Assessment of rural poverty in the eastern and Southern African region". Document circulated at the Workshop on Rural Poverty (Rome) 24-25 January.
- Kanyongolo, F. E. 2004 "Land occupations in Malawi: challenging the neoliberal legal order" in Moyo, Sam and Yeros, Paris (eds.) *Reclaiming the land: The resurgence of rural movements in Africa, Asia and Latin America* (London: Zed Publishers) Forthcoming Book.
- Kay, C. 2000 "Latin America's agrarian transformation: peasantization and proletarianization" in Bryceson, D. et al. (eds.) *Disappearing Peasantries?* (London: ITDG Publishing).
- Kinsey, B. H. 1999 *Determinants of rural household incomes and their impact on poverty and food security in Zimbabwe* (Rome: Food and Agricultural Organisation).
- Lahiff, E. 2002 *The regional implications of the crisis in Zimbabwe. Rational and principles of regional support for land reform and economic spillover* (Zimbabwe: Institute of Security Studies) 27th November.
- Mamdani, M. 1996 *Citizens and subjects: contemporary Africa and the legacy of late colonialism* (UK: Princetown University Press).
- Marongwe, N. 2003 "Farm occupations and occupiers in the new politics of land in Zimbabwe" in Hammar, Amanda; Raftopoulos, Brain and Jensen, Stig (eds.) *Zimbabwe's unfinished business: rethinking land, state and nation in the context of crisis* (Harare: Weaver Press).
- Mashinini, V. 2000 "The land problem in Lesotho: focus on contestation and conflicts". Paper presented at the SARIPS/Sapes Trust Annual Colloquium (Harare) September 24th-27th.
- MDC 2004 *RESTART: Our path to social justice. The MDC's economic programme for reconstruction, stabilisation, recovery and transformation* (Harare).
- Molomo, M. G. 2002 *Land and sustainable development in Botswana* (Harare: African Institute for Agrarian Studies) mimeo.
- Mooij, J. 2000 "Changing peasantries in Asia" in Bryceson, D. et al. (eds.) *Disappearing Peasantries?* (London: ITDG Publishing).
- Moyo, S. 1995 *The land question in Zimbabwe* (Harare: Sapes Trust).
- Moyo, S. 1998 *The land acquisition process in Zimbabwe (1997/8)* (Harare: United Nations Development Programme, UNDP).

- Moyo, S. 2000 *Land reform under structural adjustment in Zimbabwe: land use change in the Mashonaland provinces* (Stockholm: Nordiska Afrika Institutet).
- Moyo, S.; Raftopolous, B. and Makumbe, J. M. 2000 *NGOs and development in Zimbabwe* (Harare: SAPES Books).
- Moyo, S. 2001 "The land occupation movement and democratization in Zimbabwe: contradictions of neo-liberalism" in *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* (UK) Vol. 30, N° 2.
- Moyo, S. 2003 "The politics of land distribution and race relations in Southern Africa" in forthcoming book on *Racism and Public Policy* to be published by Pallgrave Press (UK).
- Moyo, S. and Sukume, C. 2004 *Agricultural sector and agrarian development strategy*. Paper prepared for World Bank (Zimbabwe), Forthcoming.
- Moyo, S. and Yeros, P. "Land Occupations and Land Reform in Zimbabwe: Towards the National Democratic Revolution" in Moyo, Sam and Yeros, Paris (eds.) *Reclaiming the Land: The Resurgence of Rural Movements in Africa, Asia and Latin America* (London: Zed Books) Forthcoming.
- Moyo, S. *Fast track land and agrarian reform in Zimbabwe contradictions of neo-liberalism*. Forthcoming book to be published by Ford Foundation, South Africa.
- Moyo, S. *The new peasant question in Zimbabwe and South Africa*. Paper presented for publication.
- Moyo, S. *The land question in Africa: research perspectives and questions* (Dakar: CODESRIA Green Book) Forthcoming.
- Nyoni, J. 2004 "Zimbabwe land policy". Paper presented at the Economic Conference on Zimbabwe Restart (Johannesburg, South Africa) 27th-28th February.
- Nzimande, B. 2004 "Continental perspectives on Zimbabwe". Paper presented at the Economic Conference on Zimbabwe Restart (Johannesburg, South Africa) 27th-28th February.
- Petras, J. 1997 "Latin America: The Resurgence of the Left" in *New Left Review* (UK) N° 223.
- Petras, J. and Veltmeyer, H. 2001 "Are Latin American peasant movements still a force for change? Some new paradigms revisited" in *Journal of Peasant Studies* (UK) Vol. 28, N° 2.
- Presidential Land Review Committee (PLRC) 2003 *Report of the Presidential Land Review Committee* (Zimbabwe) Vol. 1 and 2, main report to his Excellency The President of The Republic of Zimbabwe, August.
- Raftopoulos, B. 2003 "The state in crisis: authoritarian nationalism, selective citizenship and distortions of democracy in Zimbabwe" in Hammar, Amanda; Raftopoulos, Brain and Jensen, Stig (eds.) *Zimbabwe's unfinished business: rethinking land, state and nation in the context of crisis* (Harare: Weaver Press).
- Rutherford, B. 2001 "Commercial farm workers and the politics of displacement in Zimbabwe: colonialism, liberation and democracy" in *Journal of Agrarian Change* (UK) Vol. 1, N° 4.
- Rutherford, B. 2002 *Labour, land and civil society: the case of farm workers* (UK: Institute of Development Studies, Department of Agrarian and Labour Studies) First Annual.
- Schmidt, E. 1990 "Negotiated spaces and contested terrain: men, women and the law in colonial Zimbabwe, 1890–1939" in *Journal of Southern African Studies* (UK) Vol. 16, N° 4.
- Wildschut, A. and Hulbert, S. 1998 *A seed not sown: prospects for agrarian reform in South Africa* (South Africa: German Agro Action, Interfund and the National Land Committee) mimeo.
- World Bank 1990 *World development report* (Oxford: Oxford University Press for the World Bank).
- World Bank 1991 *Zimbabwe: agriculture sector memorandum* (Washington: World Bank) Vol I and II, N° 9429.
- World Bank 1995 *Zimbabwe achieving shared growth: country economic memorandum* (Washington: World Bank) Vol. 2.

Yeros, P. 2002a *The political economy of civilisation: peasant-workers in Zimbabwe and the neo-colonial world* (University of London) PhD Thesis.

Yeros, P. 2002b "Zimbabwe and the dilemmas of the left" in *Historical Materialism* (UK) Vol. 10, N° 2.

## Notes

\* Executive Director of the African Institute of Agrarian Studies, Harare, Zimbabwe. He has published several works related to the land question.

\*\* Revised paper presented at the CLASCO Conference on New Worldwide Hegemony. Alternatives for change and social movements, Havana, Cuba.

1 A recent collection of essays entitled *Disappearing Peasantries?* (Bryceson, Kay and Mooij, 2000).

2 Semi-proletarianisation has a longer pre-SAP history that is not well acknowledged, and is indeed generalisable to Africa (First, 1983; Cohen, 1991; Mamdani, 1996) and the rest of the periphery.

3 Mozambique expects 100 white Zimbabweans commercial farmers, while 10 have been allocated 4,000 hectares in the Manica province. A group of 63 white Zimbabweans had requested 400,000 hectares, but the government of Mozambique has put a ceiling of 1,000 hectares per individual application (Daily News, 20/07/2001).

4 Dual citizenship is not legal in Zimbabwe, and new amendments to tighten the law have recently been introduced, also generating problems around the citizenship of long standing Mozambicans and Malawian farm worker migrants who have not yet denounced their original citizenship.

5 These land sizes have since undergone further reduction, even though they still remain on the high scale for viable commercial farming.

6 That was until the government of Zimbabwe acquired and redistributed around 10 million hectares of land to an estimated 250,000 households (Moyo and Sukume, 2004). In addition, it gazetted maximum farm sizes per agro-ecological natural region that obliterated the large farm sizes.

7 Interview with Andile Mngxitama.